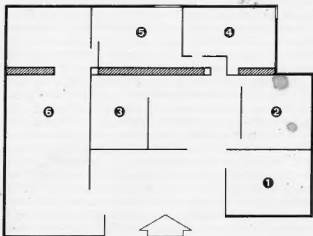# RE-VISIONS

Projects and Proposals in Film and Video

April 19-May 13, 1979

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021

1. William Anastasi, viewing a *film in/of a gallery of the period and audition*
2. Buky Schwartz, *videoconstruction*
3. Bill Beirne, *Rumor & Innuendo*
4. Morgan Fisher, *North Light*
5. Robert Watts, David Behrman, Bob Diamond, *Cloud Music*
6. Michael Snow, *Two Sides to Every Story*

RE-VISIONS: Projects and Proposals in Film and Video

brings together six works which explore the image recording processes and properties of both mediums through the design of their production and installation. Each project addresses the perception of that imagery by investigating the basis, and origins, of the film and video presentation and production processes within the work itself. The three film installations explore the interrelationship between the image and the surface onto which it is projected. The three video projects treat the composition and perception of live images through the use of closed-circuit cameras and monitors. Central to all of these projects is a revision of representing what is before the camera's lens. Each project employs a variety of formal strategies to elaborate and bring within the aesthetic discourse of the work the conceptualization, installation, and presentation as a single process. Various projects contain within this process important music, audio, and performance components which, along with the sound of the projectors in the silent pieces, serve to revise our relationship to the reality and illusions created out of the world before the camera.

The film installations by William Anastasi, Morgan Fisher, and Michael Snow each displays a different set of strategies in articulating the two-dimensional perspective of the film image and its relationship, through its content and the process of projection, to the surface onto which it is continually projected. These works further elaborate the projector as a metaphor for the camera in the way the projector's placement correlates to the content of the image. The dialectic of the camera / projector and the explicit acknowledgment of the role the projection surface plays joins these works as aesthetic discourses on the medium's methods of production and projection. William Anastasi's *viewing a film in l of a gallery of the period and audition* elaborates on specific concerns that are established in his painting and photographic works which date from the 1960s. In those photographic installations and wall projects Anastasi treated place and surface as containers of their own imagery. Anastasi presented to the viewer a renewed awareness of the points of view of the spectator, and the composition of the image in relationship to its placement within the exhibition space. His most recent film piece, presented here, projects onto the wall a silent, color film loop of the gallery wall's white surface. The continuous loop describes a static movement of the space where the wall's surface functions as a support of a spatial and temporal illusion of itself. It also plays with the ambiguity provoked by the expectation of seeing movement enter into the image, an image framed by the very space in which the spectator now stands and moves. The image is an acknowledgment of the two-dimensionality of the projected image as it conflates the point of view of the camera and that of the projector.

Morgan Fisher's *North Light* pursues the artist's concern with the process of filmmaking as he here treats the myth of the screen as a window onto the world. The image is a continuous silent, color loop, projected onto the third floor's north gallery wall, of the view of the opposite side of Seventy-fifth Street. The image can only approximate what a rectangular break in the wall would reveal in terms of the camera's position, the two-dimensionality of the image, the position of the projector, and a number of optical factors in filming and projecting the image. Fisher's installation

establishes a complex metaphor of the representation of point of view within the image and in relationship to the production of the projected image and its placement.

Michael Snow's *Two Sides to Every Story* consists of two projectors, forty feet apart, projecting onto opposite sides of an opaque screen situated midway between them in the gallery. The projectors' positions are the same as those from which the film was shot, and the image is a play on the title of the work. The viewer moving from one side to the other can never see both sides at once and thus, in the process, participates in the work. This work is closely linked to work by Snow in photography where the position and scale of the image correlates to the object or action being photographed. Just as the strip of celluloid, that is the film, runs through the projector, so too the image (itself directing its own production both on the soundtrack and visually) becomes visible when the beam of light strikes the surface of the screen, the very referent of the film's action.

Each of the film installations in the exhibition presents the projection, the projection surface, and the film's photographic image as critical factors in the perception and realization of the pieces. We are made aware of the projectors, of the fact that this is film, that this is a filmed image, and of the illusions contained within that image. The effect of these works also rests in the awareness they leave with the viewer of himself as an active participant in the viewing of the works.

The three video projects, by Bill Beirne, Buky Schwartz, and Robert Watts, David Behrman, and Bob Diamond, employ closed-circuit video systems and monitors to record live images from a variety of points of view. The camera's position and field of vision articulate the composition and the field of action within the monitor's screen. Here we are made aware of the video system presenting continuous live images. This property unique to video is the basis of the distinguishing visual properties and, in the case of two of the projects, audio components of the pieces.

Bill Beirne's *Rumor & Innuendo* is a video, audio, and performance work which places four video cameras and four microphones in six public spaces and two offices of the Museum. The spaces are designated by wall labels and tape fixed to the surfaces which describe the parameters of the video camera's field of vision and the microphone's range of audio pickup. The video and audio components are transmitted to four monitors and four speakers on the third floor. During the course of the exhibition, performers will be following the silent movements of people on the screen and will themselves perform subtly modified reflections on these spaces and on the actions contained within them. Thus, the border between real and performed activity is developed. The separation of the audio components from the video develops the sense of dislocation and familiarity, a closure and disclosure of sound and image lending greater ambiguity to the sites. What the camera shows is only a fragment of each public space, yet it tranfers it from a seemingly arbitrary point of view into a performance space. By transforming these public and private areas into performance spaces, Beirne explores our notion of the spaces we occupy and enlarges our perception of the medium.

Buky Schwartz's *videoconstructions* are created for the point of view of the camera. They radically transform the elements

constructed within the viewer's field of vision into uniquely video phenomena. From the point of view of the video camera that space into which it is directed contains a geometric figure composed of painted areas on the gallery walls and floor. As the viewer moves through this space he sees himself confronted by something he can only see on the monitor and which can only be completed on the screen's surface. The bold clear imagery of Schwartz's *videoconstructions* belies the subtle nature of coming upon and comprehending that space. The variety of scale of both the wall configurations and the material on the floor's surface involves the camera, the space, and the viewer in a geometric enclosure and the creation of a sculptural presence.

Cloud Music is a collaborative piece by Robert Watts, David Behrman, and Bob Diamond. A video camera is positioned to point to the sky from the Museum's third-floor north window. As clouds pass across the sky and into the field of vision of the camera, they will pass over six electronically generated points on the screen. As the clouds pass these points, their voltage varies in response to the light content of the clouds. A digital electronic music system senses the changes in voltage produced by the analyzer, which the music system then converts into harmonic progressions and dynamic shifts. In this piece our sense of the image is both visual and aural as we become sensitized to the subtle changes in the image. Here, chance — the changes in the sky — alters the image and music component in a synthesis of visual and aural compositions. *Cloud Music* is a confluence of conception and technology, music and the visual text, in a contemplative work where the alterations in sound and image become one.

Also on view in the exhibition are the artists' plans for the six installations and proposals for new projects. These plans include sketches and architectural drawings. Photographic studies by Buky Schwartz describe the relationship of photography to his *videoconstructions*. In addition, a selection of photographs and documentation of photographic installations by William Anastasi will be on view. Michael Snow's photographic work will be represented by pieces which treat the relationship of the scale and placement of the photograph to the content of the image. For both artists, this will show the relationship of their work in photography to their films.

John G. Hanhardt
Curator, Film and Video

CLOUD MUSIC Robert Watts, David Behrman, Bob Diamond

Robert Watts
Born in Burlington, Iowa
Lives in Bangor, Pennsylvania

Selected one-artist exhibitions
Bianchini Gallery, New York, 1966
San Francisco Art Institute, 1969
Ricke Gallery, Cologne, 1970
Rene Block Gallery, New York, 1976

Selected group exhibitions
Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Whitney
    Museum of American Art, New York, 1965
Multiplicity, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1966
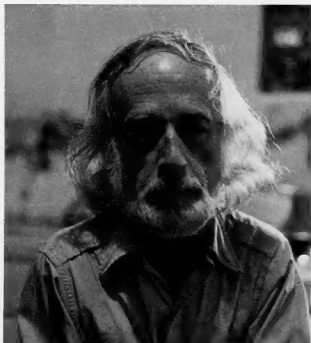*Information*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970
Documenta 5, Kassel, West Germany, 1972

Events, Happenings, Environments
Monday Night Letter, Cafe Au Go Go, New York, 1964-65
Communication in a Noisy Environment, Automation House, New
    York, 1970
Flux Event. Time, The Clocktower, The Institute for Art and Urban
    Resources, New York, 1976

David Behrman
Born in Salzburg, Austria
Lives in New York

Selected performances
Harvard College, Cambridge, 1962
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 1967
Ryerson Institute, Toronto, 1968
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1969
Automation House, New York, 1970
United States Embassy, London, 1971
Festival d'Automne de Paris, 1974
The Kitchen Center for Video and Music, New York, 1978

Selected performances with Sonic Arts Union (Robert Ashley, David Behrman, Alvin Lucier, Gordon Mumma)
Cité Université, Geneva, 1969
Accademia Filarmonica, Rome, 1969
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1970
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1973

Photo: Mary Lucier

Bob Diamond

Born in New York
Lives in San Jose, California

Grants

NASA Research Assistantship, 1963-68
New York State Council on the Arts, Engineer-in-Residence,
    Experimental TV Center, Binghamton, 1971-73 (assisted in
    development of Paik-Abe synthesizer)
Rockefeller Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts,
    Ford Foundation, Engineer, Artist-in-Residence, WNET TV
    Lab, New York, 1972-73 (designed computer controlled video
    switcher with Nam June Paik)

Other

Electronics Design Consultant in video broadcast industry,
    1972-77
Designer of video portion of *Cloud Music*, 1972-73